

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

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Edited by FRED J. PIERCE

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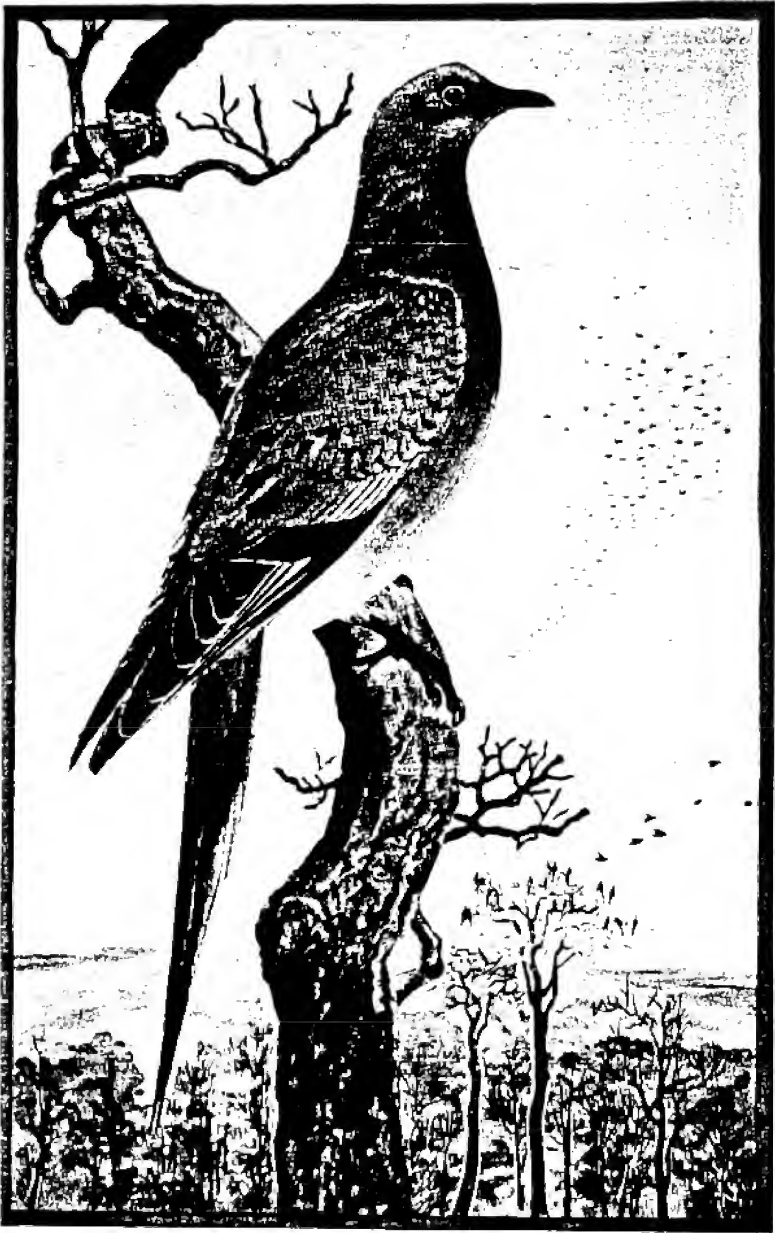
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Field Notes on Iowa birds, book news, and historical or biographical material pertaining to Iowa ornithology are desired for publication.

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WINTHROP, IOWA



Drawing by E. J. Sawyer

### THE PASSENGER PIGEON

A beautiful bird that once ranged over eastern North America in flocks of countless millions. It was well known to the early settlers of Iowa, to whom its enormous migration presented a never-to-be-forgotten spectacle. Very few were seen after the close of the Nineteenth Century, and the species is now extinct.

## IOWA'S VANISHED HOSTS

By E. D. NAUMAN

One of our well known ornithologists said, "The Passenger Pigeon was in some respects the finest pigeon the world has seen." Many careful observers have considered it, in its day, as the most numerous bird in the world. Now it is extinct. The writer of these lines has the fortunate distinction of having seen hundreds of thousands of these birds with his own eyes. And this was in our own state of Iowa.

The Passenger Pigeon was about the size of our domestic pigeon, but it was longer and very graceful in form, and was most handsome in coloration. In the sunshine the feathers of its head, neck and back showed about all the colors of the rainbow. Without the least reflection on the work of any taxidermist, I may say candidly that the few poor, desiccated and distorted specimens to be found in our museums give but a meager impression of the appearance of the live bird. Unfortunately, they are all that is left of the hosts of millions that are gone.

These pigeons inhabited, at some season of the year, the entire timbered area of eastern North America. However, at times when nuts, acorns, and the seeds of trees, which constituted their natural food, became scarce, they made excursions into fields of grain; and by reason of their immense numbers, they did considerable damage to farm crops. At the time of the earliest settlements, and for many years thereafter, the great multitudes of Wild Pigeons made such an impression upon the minds of men that the extinction of the species seemed an impossibility. Nevertheless, it occurred. They lived, migrated and nested in and over these great forests in enormous colonies. Their roosts and nesting areas were anywhere from a few miles to fifty miles in extent and located mostly in the larger hardwood forests of the Middlewest. Single trees have been found supporting over a hundred nests. The rule with the Wild Pigeons was to lay only one or sometimes two eggs at a nesting, but to nest three or four times a season.

I have examined the writings of about fifty observers, and they all agree in statements declaring that the numbers of the Wild Pigeon were vast beyond the comprehension of man. Some careful observers have placed estimates of single flocks or colonies at from twenty million to two billion birds. When destruction came, however, it came by the hand of the white man, and in a hundred different ways. The great forests were mostly destroyed; the pigeons were enticed into open fields by proffered food and were netted by thousands; their nests were robbed; they were shot, clubbed and trapped in every conceivable way. Their nesting colonies were broken up by squab hunters, and when the pigeons moved a hundred miles or more to try again, they were immediately set upon by other hunters. Any bird thus systematically prevented from raising its young will soon become extinct from that cause alone.

My own observations of the Passenger Pigeon were confined to southeastern Iowa. This being mostly a prairie state, I do not know that the pigeons ever found enough forest area here to establish a nesting colony. We saw them in their migrations across the state. These were largely irregular. Some seasons we would see them flying northward for two or three days in April or May. Perhaps the next year they would not be seen in the spring at all, but in October or November instead. As a rule, during the migration, flocks would pass over all day long. They would form in great "windrows" of pigeons across the sky from horizon to horizon, sometimes in lines not so long, but always at right angles with the direction in which they were flying. Between these windrows of pigeons a strip of the sky could usually

be seen. The flocks were frequently so dense they obscured the sun like passing clouds. When the weather was calm, the pigeons maintained a very nearly level and uniform elevation throughout their lines, but in windy weather the lines would twist and writhe like huge serpents in the sky. At such times one could best see their remarkable colors scintillating in the sunshine, according to the angle or point of view. At night they would settle down in the trees and small forest tracts along the streams to roost.

A tract of forest several hundred yards south of our cabin home was a favorite roosting place for the pigeons. In a prominent place within this forest stood an immense red oak tree. When some years later it fell a victim of age, decay and the woodman's ax, a count of its annual rings showed its age to be 418 years. This gigantic tree, the patriarch of all the surrounding forest, was the center of the roosting place, and many of its great limbs were broken down by the weight of the pigeons.

At every migration their numbers became smaller, until about 1880 we saw the last of them. Other planets belonging to the infinite number of solar systems of the universe may harbor hundreds of thousands of interesting birds similar to these, but humanity will never again see a live Passenger Pigeon upon this globe.

## THE EARLY IOWA BIRD MAGAZINES

By FRED J. PIERCE

The bird student who has a penchant for collecting rare books and papers has a good field open to him in the four ornithological serials which were published in Iowa during the last two decades of the last century and in the early years of the present century. All of these magazines are rare today, but the true collector thrives on rarities; the greater the difficulty in finding certain desiderata, the greater is the pleasure when acquisition is finally accomplished. The writer of this article is a collector of such magazines. He has experienced much pleasure in building up files of the old Iowa bird magazines in his library.

Since little information is available on this subject, it has been deemed worth while to prepare a brief sketch of the early ornithological serials which had their birth in Iowa. Our space is limited, and in order to keep this paper within the confines of brevity, only the publications which were quite strictly ornithological will be considered. However, mention should be made of the other natural history publications (some of which contained occasional bird articles) so that those who wish to go further into the subject will know what may be looked for. These include: 'The Young Collector' (monthly, continued as 'The Collector', Des Moines, 1882 and evidently part of 1881); 'The Hawkeye Observer' (monthly, Davenport, 9 issues in 1885 and 1 in 1886); 'The Agassiz Record' (monthly, Oskaloosa, 6 issues in 1888); 'The Ornithologist and Botanist' (originated at Binghamton, N. Y., in 1891, but in 1892 the publication office was removed to Des Moines and a few issues were printed there—not to be classed as an Iowa serial, however); 'The Naturalist' (Des Moines, 1 issue only, 1893); 'The American Magazine of Natural Science' (monthly, Sac City, 22 issues during 1892-1894, but some of the earlier issues were evidently published at Old Bridge, N. J.); 'The Iowa Naturalist' (Iowa City, 9 issues between 1905 and 1911); 'The Curio Bulletin' (quarterly, originated at Chicago, Ill., but one issue was published at Osage in 1910); 'The Curio Collector' (quarterly, Osage, 5 issues in 1911-1912).\*

\*In regard to these publications it would be well to consult "A Bibliography of Scarce or Out of Print North American Amateur and Trade Periodicals Devoted More or Less to Ornithology," compiled by Frank J. Burns. This complete and valuable guide was published in 1915, and has been sold by R. M. Barnes, publisher of 'The Oologist', Lacon, Ill. Presumably it is still available.

## THE HAWKEYE ORNITHOLOGIST AND OOLOGIST (1888-1889)

The first Iowa ornithological magazine began as a monthly, published by E. B. Webster and F. D. Mead, at Cresco. The first issue was in January, 1888; 134 pages were printed during the year. Vol. II ran through 84 pages, until September, 1889 (No. 9), when the printing office was destroyed by fire, after which the publication was suspended. It was a neatly printed little magazine with cover. The page size was 6 by 9 inches for five issues; after that it was nearly an inch larger. The circulation is not known, but it was doubtless rather limited; this, together with the fact that the stock of extra copies was evidently destroyed in the fire, accounts for the excessive rarity of the magazine. Only two complete sets are known to me: one owned by R. M. Barnes, Lacon, Illinois, and the other by Dr. Witmer Stone, Philadelphia. Apparently, there are very few copies in Iowa and no sets.

The writer has one copy in his possession—the issue of March, 1888. Immediately under the title the first page contains the following rhyme:

"Better to search the fields for health untought,  
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught,  
The wise for health on exercise depend,  
God never made his work for man to mend."

The contributors to the magazine were from various sections of the country and included W. C. Brownell, Oliver Davis, J. D. Ford, R. M. Gibbs, J. W. Jacobs, L. O. Pindar, J. B. Purdy, E. G. Ward, J. Claire Wood, and others.

Late in 1888 E. B. Webster took over the publication and continued it alone. His present home is at Port Angeles, Washington. In a letter to me dated February 27, 1933, he says, in part: "I have only two or three copies of the 'Hawkeye Ornithologist and Oologist', but it wasn't much of a magazine, anyway. Still, I had a lot of fun getting it out and made a number of very good friends thru the work. It was issued monthly, usually 12 pages, and, believe me, that was a task in those days of handset type and a 'two pages at a time' job-press. I often think, when I step into my shop where there are five linotypes and six presses and a bunch of men each of whom earns as much in a day as we did in a week in the old days, that I surely was one of those who were 'born 30 years too soon.' At that, I remember that I wasn't anywhere near as tired of the work as I might have been, for the fire that destroyed that part of the town wherein I had my shop seemed at the time to be the blow that almost killed father. Shortly after I was induced to start a weekly newspaper; after 15 years of that we moved to Port Angeles."

## THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGIST (1894-1898)

The Iowa Ornithological Association was organized on June 15, 1894, our first state-wide bird organization. The charter membership was as follows: (Active) Rudolph M. Anderson, Carleton R. Ball, Paul Bartsch, Wm. A. Bryan, Jno. V. Crone, H. J. Giddings, A. P. Godley, Ernest Irons, Chas. R. Keyes, J. Eugene Law, W. W. Loomis, Wilmon Newell, F. G. Richardson, Walter G. Savage, David L. Savage, W. W. Searles, Fred R. Stearns, Chas. C. Tryon, E. B. Webster, Paul C. Woods; (Honorary) R. D. Goss, Wm. Savage; (Associate) A. W. Baylis, W. H. Maycock, Paul P. McGinty, H. M. McLaughlin. The largest enrollment reported was 89, in 1898. One member was George C. Hoover, of West Branch, a second cousin of Herbert Hoover. (He died in Washington about three years ago.)

Vol. I, No. 1 of 'The Iowa Ornithologist', the official organ of the Association, appeared in October, 1894. The little magazine ran through 15 quarterly issues, until Vol. IV, No. 3, July, 1898, when it was suspended. The first three volumes averaged somewhat over 80 pages each; the fourth volume contained 64 pages. David L. Savage, of Salem, was editor through the entire series. It was a very neat publi-

cation, about 6 by 9 inches in size, with attractive cover, and illustrated by numerous woodcuts and a few halftones. The pages were brimful of notes on Iowa birds, including numerous records of considerable importance. The youthful publishers were very enthusiastic over the future of their magazine. They received a generous advertising patronage, and printing costs were low (at one time it was stated that a full year's issues, in editions of 500 copies, cost \$80; at another time the cost was \$9 an issue). The subscription rate was 40c a year, 50c to members. Funds were always limited, it appears, and by the end of the second year the president was making an urgent plea for financial assistance. But the work went on in spite of difficulties, and the young Iowa ornithologists of the nineties were entitled to much credit for their sustained efforts to produce a magazine.

Those were the days of handset type, which produced numerous typographical errors. On the whole, however, the magazine was a very creditable production. Frequent change of printer detracted somewhat from the uniformity of the issues. It was first printed at Salem, then at Cresco (by E. B. Webster, former publisher of the 'Hawkeye O. and O.'). Later it was evidently printed at Avoca and Ames. The first two volumes were printed with a double-column page; later ones were not. Three issues were printed entirely in blue ink. There were at least 10 variations in cover design, but the lettering remained the same. The quotation, "Go forth under the open sky, and list to Nature's teachings," was given a prominent place on all the covers. One or two other minor journals of the period used the same quotation. Most of the illustrations used were quite suitable, although there were a few exceptions. During 1898, when Ames was the publication office, there was included a reproduction of an artist's canvas that certainly had no relation to Iowa birds. It was an idealistic scene—heavy woodland surrounding a small pool, a mountain in the distance, and a dead or sleeping deer in the foreground. Under the picture appears the line, "Mid Haunts of Coot and Tern."

Among the bird notes are found occasional articles which reveal some journalistic tendencies of those days. The authors were now and then inspired to lofty literary heights, while a religious trend of thought with scriptural references was not unusual. The following excerpt is an example of this type of composition: "The birds are with most people associated with everything that is kindly, and pure, and tender, and good, and a sort of affection springs up even in the infant's heart towards the four and twenty blackbirds that did not cease from singing though baked in a pie, and the feeling deepens in childhood, as it listens with a sense of solemn woe, to the tragic tale of 'Babes in the Wood' and 'Gentle Redbreast,' increasing to something like reverence for the lessons they teach the observant man, as the prophet Moses likened the afflictions of life to an eagle that 'stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings,' so adverse circumstances bring out what is highest and noblest in character, just as the young eagle must be pushed out of its nest before it will dare to essay the use of its wings."

The reason for the demise of the Association does not appear in the magazine. No doubt the war in 1898, and the removal of some of the most active members to other fields of activity, together with financial matters, were responsible. Without the parent organization the magazine could no longer exist. The circulation of the magazine is not known, although for a number of issues 500 copies were printed. Complete sets are now rare (see the list of sets in 'Iowa Bird Life' for June, 1933, pp. 27-28).

#### THE WESTERN ORNITHOLOGIST (1900)

This magazine was published by C. C. Tryon, of Avoca. The full title was 'The Western Ornithologist, Formerly the Iowa Ornithologist',

and it began as Vol. V, No. 1. No doubt it was thought that designating it as a continuation of a former successful magazine would lend success to its career. Unlike its predecessor, however, it represented no organization, and this fact undoubtedly determined its brief existence. Tryon was the editor, and David L. Savage and Carl Fritz Henning were associate editors. Henning had charge of the book review department.

Publication was begun on a very pretentious scale, and the magazine was no doubt one of the most ostentatious bird journals of the period. It was 7 by 10½ inches in size, with attractive cover of different design for each issue, and was printed from large, clear type, on a fine quality of paper. It was profusely illustrated by halftones and linecuts, including a full-page portrait of Carl Fritz Henning. The first issue was printed in two editions, and editorial statements inform us that "several thousand" sample copies of each issue were mailed to prospective subscribers. Subscription was 50c a year, and bi-monthly publication was intended. The editor had high ambitions. He says: "Not only will the entire U. S. be thoroughly reviewed, but various districts beyond its borders will, from time to time, be represented in these columns, especially our new possessions which are just coming into prominence and which open vast fields for ornithological study."

Contributors to the magazine included Morton E. Peck, Wm. Savage, Burtis H. Wilson, Mrs. Mary L. Rann, Guy C. Rich, W. W. Loomis, Wilmon Newell, H. J. Giddings, and the editors.

Three issues appeared—January-February, March-April, and May-June, 1900 (66 pages in all)—after which the magazine passed out of existence. Most of the thousands of samples must have been soon discarded, for copies are very rare today. Tryon enlisted in the U. S. Army sometime during 1900, and the record of him seems to end at that time.

#### THE BITTERN (1900-1901)

Immediately after the suspension of 'The Western Ornithologist', Glen M. Hathorn, of Cedar Rapids, created 'The Bittern.' Here, indeed, was a small bird magazine, for it was only 4½ by 5½ inches in size, but it had a neat cover design, was printed on enameled paper, and carried several halftone illustrations. Subscription was 50c a year. Three issues were published in 1900—June, August, and October (a total of 57 pages). From correspondence with Mr. Hathorn, who now lives at Flint, Michigan, I conclude that these three issues were printed by him on a small press of his own.

It was decided that a larger magazine was necessary, so, in January, 1901, a 7 by 9½ inch, 16-page issue appeared. Among the illustrations in this number is a likeness of Editor Hathorn, a decidedly youthful figure. It was announced that Carl Fritz Henning had accepted the associate editorship. This issue was mis-labeled Vol. I, No. 1; it should have been Vol. II. Contributors were P. B. Peabody, Morris Gibbs, Albert F. Ganier, Carl Fritz Henning, and several others. An appeal for subscriptions ended with these words, "'Son, go hump thyself'"—an admonition that evidently went unheeded. That was the last issue of the little magazine.

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An illustrated bulletin on "Care of Bob-white Quail in Winter", by our President, Dr. George O. Hendrickson, has just been issued by the Agricultural Extension Service of Iowa State College, Ames. It contains a great deal of useful information for both farmers and bird students. Dr. Hendrickson informs us that he will be glad to send copies to all members who ask for them. Write him in care of the College.



## GENERAL NOTES

**Winter Bird Notes from Keokuk County, Iowa.**—Below is our 1932 Christmas bird census as originally prepared for publication. It is followed by some explanatory paragraphs and other notes on the winter birds of this region which we believe will be of interest to Iowa bird students.

Webster, Iowa (Porter School, south and west to English River, downstream and return across country).—Dec. 22; 8 A. M. to 4:30 P. M. Thin clouds at start, heavy clouds and mist at return; patches of snow on the ground; light south wind; temp. 25 degrees at start, 35 degrees at return, maximum for day 45 degrees. Ten miles on foot. Observers together. Red-tailed Hawk, 3; Broad-winged (?) Hawk, 4; Bob-white, 95 (7 coveys); Screech Owl, 1; Barred Owl, 1; Flicker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 4; Red-headed Woodpecker, 51; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 17; Blue Jay, 26; Crow, 8; Black-capped Chickadee, 76; Tufted Titmouse, 20; White-breasted Nuthatch, 14; Meadowlark, 17; Red-winged Blackbird, 1; Cardinal, 24; Goldfinch, 74; Slate-colored Junco, 62; Tree Sparrow, 132; Song Sparrow, 5. Total, 22 species, 640 individuals.

The birds were more numerous than on any former winter bird trip, in spite of the extremely cold weather of two weeks previous to the census.

The Red-headed Woodpeckers were more numerous than they are on most spring or summer trips we have taken. Upon entering a fairly densely wooded section of the river-bottom land, we were surprised to see them flying back and forth from a nearby open field; we counted four birds here. At noon we found a protected spot behind a woodpile where we could rest and eat our lunch. We spent considerable time here and counted 10 Red-headed Woodpeckers. We counted 37 more on the remainder of the trip.

We listed 24 Cardinals, but only 8 were found in a small area where last year there were 39. The 17 Meadowlarks were in one flock near a farm feed-lot. The Tufted Titmouse has not appeared to be common here before. We observed a passing flock of about 30 birds which, from their actions, we took to be Prairie Horned Larks, but they were too far away for positive identification.

We frequently see startling headlines in papers about some very brave person taking a cold plunge into icy waters at the time of year when ice skates are considered more useful than bathing suits. Then some one belittles the act by telling us that many of the Indians bathed regularly in the rivers in winter. Even this, however, does not dull one's interest when he chances to see a fluttering ball of feathers and icy spray as our hardy feathered friends splash about in winter streams.

While we sat on a bridge-railing trying to get an accurate count of the Red-headed Woodpeckers on our census trip, we discovered that we had apparently been so rude as to disturb several birds at their bath. One could hardly believe that they resented it, however, for soon a Tree Sparrow very daintily continued his bath and manipulated his own shower. His privacy was further intruded upon by others of his kind and a lone Song Sparrow. They seemed to be trying to offset the cold by much activity, for the fluttering of wings and alternate dipping of head and tail were more rapid than the eye that tried to follow their movements. Later in the day, in a more protected ravine, the Goldfinch was observed taking a mid-afternoon plunge. The ever-curious nuthatch divided his attention between the bathing of the Goldfinch and the prospect of a meal in a pile of brush at the water edge.

After considering the inconveniences and discomforts of winter bathing, most of us, no doubt, would prefer a method employed by a Yellow Warbler which we once observed. He had chosen the warmer season



of late spring, and we found him in a little clearing among hazelbrush where the blue grass was quite long and heavily laden with dew. He seemed to be having the time of his life as he darted into the wet grass, knocking from it the sparkling water droplets. It was one of the bright spots in the life of a bird lover, probably a reward for patient observing, certainly not to be shared by those who rush about seeking less satisfying thrills.—MR. AND MRS. M. L. JONES.

**The Present Range of the Starling in Iowa**—There have been more reports of the Starling in Iowa during the past two or three winters than during the intervening summer months. This may be explained in part by the fact that roving flocks hunting for food will wander considerable distances, frequently invading new territory. It may be well, therefore, to present a statement of the present range of the Starling in Iowa so far as observations have been reported or published.

The writer has learned of no reports from Des Moines County, although certainly Starlings have been present there for some time. At the present time (September, 1933) I know of no reports from the following counties: Allamakee, Winneshiek, Howard, Mitchell, Worth, Cerro Gordo, Butler, Grundy, Marshall, Jasper, Warren, Lucas, Monroe, Wapello, and Davis. There are observations in all counties south and east of this irregular line. The only counties west of this line in which the Starling has been reported are as follows: Story, Boone, Polk, Dallas, Decatur, Union, Calhoun, Ida, and Monona.

It is of interest during these years of the Starling invasion to note the first occurrences in each of the remaining counties.

In the last issue (September) of 'Iowa Bird Life,' an error occurred in my article (p. 41). The last five lines of the article referred to the Starling, not to the Red-tailed Hawk. The words "Two more specimens" (line 4, p. 41) should have been followed by "of the Starling." This omission makes this portion of the article seem to refer to the hawks when this was not intended.—PHILIP A. DU MONT, Des Moines, Iowa.

**Late Purple Martin Broods.**—Young martins were still in my martin house on August 11 (1933), nearly two weeks past their usual time of leaving the house. The first installment left on the 21st of July. Another exodus took place on August 3. There was at least one belated family whose parents were not willing to abandon them—so the feeding went on, and morning and night deputations of the roving colony returned to see how matters were progressing.

Several years ago I witnessed a tragic end to a similar situation. All the broods were on the wing except one. Two little birds in this nest were quite young, and the mother became discouraged of ever getting them in condition to take the long flight with the colony. She would not abandon them, but she seemed to feel that they were too lately hatched to be ready to go with the rest. So there she stayed. They would call, raise their heads to the opening of their apartment, then drop back again—never a moth, never a dragonfly to feed them. Night and morning the old neighbors would come back, fly up to the house, look in, and retire to talk it over. Soon there were no more calls. I saw some black flies near the nest. Then the mother flew away and joined her band. . . . It was tragic, but I did not doubt her judgment.—Mrs. F. L. BATTELL, Ames, Iowa.

**1933 Notes from Story County.**—Upland Plovers have been more numerous than usual. I have noted their appearance during the season as follows: May 8, one heard; May 18, one seen; June 1, one seen; June 10, found head and wings of one killed by cat; (Grimalkin was consigned to the "catacombs" shortly afterwards); June 27, two seen; June 29, three seen.

Bob-whites are also apparently increasing in numbers, as their cheery whistle is heard often, and several coveys of young have been noted. Hawks, of the genus *Buteo*, have been uncommonly scarce and very rarely observed. Marsh Hawks and Sparrow Hawks are noted more often.

The Wood Thrush and the Towhee were entirely missed during the spring migration. On June 19, 1933, I noted a Mourning Dove sitting on an old Robin's nest in a box-elder tree, and on June 28 the nest contained young. Dr. T. S. Roberts, in "Birds of Minnesota", states that the Mourning Dove occasionally makes use of the abandoned nests of other species.—HENRY BIRKELAND, Nevada, Iowa.

**Franklin's Gulls at Spirit Lake.**—The first week in September, 1933, we spent some time in the field near Spirit Lake, Iowa. The only note of general interest that we made was the great decrease in the number of Franklin's Gulls. We saw only a very few. Five years ago, by the first of September, they were there in great numbers, as reported in 'Iowa Bird Life', II, 1932, pp. 26-27. Two years ago Aldo Leopold estimated their number at 15,000. This would be only a very small fraction of the number that used to appear there. This year we saw less than 100.—F. L. R. ROBERTS, Iowa City, Iowa.

**Some Fall Migration Flights.**—The writer was particularly well situated to watch migrating birds in the fall of 1933. The first species to come under observation was the Nighthawk. On September 18, the real flight began, and during the afternoon and evening of that day I saw hundreds of the birds. The Nighthawks flew in a leisurely fashion, feeding all the while, and gradually drifted south. The next species watched was the Chimney Swift, with the main flight on September 24. These birds also moved in great flocks. At times several hundred birds were in sight at once.

The main flight of Barn Swallows began on September 25 and continued that day and all of the next day. These birds were more determined in their flight, and a continuous stream of birds flew southward steadily. Thousands of these swallows were seen during the two day flight.

From seven until nine o'clock on the morning of October 4, Walter R. Youngworth and the writer watched an inspiring flight of great flocks of White Pelicans. They came in large scattered flocks, as a rule, but occasionally a group of 50 birds would be flying in a perfect "V" formation. A mild north wind was blowing, and the birds seemed set on making the most of it. On only one occasion did we see a flock break its direct flight and start circling in great sweeping arcs, as they often do during migration flights. A careful estimate placed the number of birds at more than 6000.

During the first two weeks of October many Blue Jays were seen migrating. Flocks of from 5 to 15 birds were seen and always they were flying high, showing that they were not just making short flights from one clump of trees to another.—WM. YOUNG WORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

**Type Specimens of Birds Taken in Iowa.**—The original descriptions of the Long-billed Dowitcher, Krider's Hawk, and Montana Horned Owl were based upon type specimens taken in Iowa.

Thomas Say, a member of Major Long's expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1819-1820, secured several specimens of Dowitcher at a pond on Boyer Creek, Pottawattamie County, probably near the present site of Council Bluffs. In the report of the expedition (I, 1823, p. 170), Say described *Limosa scolopacea* from these specimens. While Pierce Brodtkorb was recently studying the Genus *Limnodromus* Wied, he was ad-

vised by Dr. Witmer Stone that none of Say's types was preserved. Brodtkorb, in his treatment of this genus (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., Vol. 46, pp. 123-128), considered *Limosa scolopacea* Say a synonym of *Limnodromus g. griseus* (Gmelin).

Krider's Hawk was described (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci., Phila., XXV, 1873, p. 238, pl. 5) by Bernard A. Hoopes from a specimen collected by John Krider during September, 1872, in Winnebago County. Dr. Witmer Stone wrote (August 31, 1932) that the type specimens of both *Buteo borealis krideri* and *Bubo virginianus occidentalis* were in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

Dr. Stone described (Auk, XIII, 1896, p. 156) the Montana Horned Owl from a specimen collected during the winter of 1880 in Mitchell County. This specimen, probably a female, is now No. 26435 in the Philadelphia Academy collection. Stone stated that the specimen was collected by W. L. Abbott, but it probably was shot by a resident of Winnebago County (J. W. Lindley or Dave Hill) during the winter and disposed of to Abbott at the time of his trip into northern Iowa during 1881.—PHILIP A. DU MONT, Des Moines, Iowa.

"LITTLE BIRDS IN  
THEIR NEST AGREE"  
—THAT IT'S TIME  
FOR LUNCH.

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J. F. Widman and Sons,  
McGregor, Iowa.



**An English Sparrow-Cardinal Hybrid.**—On August 25, 1933, Mrs. Roberts and I saw a bird which we believe may have been a hybrid between an English Sparrow and a Cardinal. The bird was feeding with a flock of English Sparrows in the business district of Iowa City. It was a little smaller than the sparrows. It had a red bill much too large for the rest of the body, there was a patch of black around the base of the bill, the head and neck were red, not quite so brilliant as in a full plumaged male Cardinal but more brilliant than in a female. The wings and tail were brown. After some delay I obtained the assistance of a policeman with a rifle, as I wished to collect the bird, but we were unable to find it again.—F. L. R. ROBERTS, Iowa City, Iowa.

**Caspian Tern and Krider's Hawk in Southeastern Iowa.**—On October 1, 1933, we found a Caspian Tern in Louisa County, at the point where the Iowa River flows into the Mississippi. We first recognized it as a tern at a distance of one-fourth mile or more, by its graceful, swallow-like flight. Our daughters saw it dive and catch a fish. We studied

it with the telescope, and later it flew near enough so that its large size, black cap, slight crest, big red bill, and slightly forked tail were clearly seen by all of us.

On October 8, 1933, we saw a Krider's Hawk a short distance west of Tiffin, in Johnson County. It flew about over a field 300 feet from us, then alighted in the dead top branches of a tree in the field. We studied it for some time through the telescope. Our notes on its markings were as follows: Dark band across the base of the tail and faint barring on under side of tail, otherwise tail white; underparts white except for flecks of black which formed a loose band across lower breast; wings dark with faint white markings, underside of wings largely white; bill blue-gray; iris yellow; throat white; sides of head white except for brownish marks which were especially heavy below back of eye; top of head and back of neck dark brown flecked with white; legs yellow, lower tarsi unfeathered; back gray-brown flecked with white.

—MARY PRICE ROBERTS, Iowa City, Iowa.

**Bird Notes during August, 1933, from Polk County, Iowa.**—During August of this year a special effort was made to secure information on migrant shore-birds and "white herons" in Polk County. The following observations were made while on field trips with D. J. Bullock of Des Moines.

Exceedingly few mud-flats were found that proved suitable for feeding shore-birds. All of the flood ponds were entirely dry. Practically all permanent ponds and sloughs were grown high with weeds or marsh vegetation. A few were found with muddy, unvegetated edges, but in most instances this condition had resulted from the presence of cattle or pigs. Undoubtedly suitable food for shore-birds was thereby destroyed as none of these mud-flats was frequented by any sandpipers. The only type of mud-flats that were found to attract shore-birds were those resulting from recently falling water levels in cut-off creek beds or former river channels. Such localities were found along the Des Moines River south of Des Moines, and along the Skunk River northwest of Mitchellville.

The numbers of Spotted Sandpipers remained nearly the same throughout August. The Eastern Solitary Sandpiper was surprisingly numerous. Nearly every secluded woodland pond had several individuals. Fifteen were seen southeast of Des Moines, August 11; 26 were noted at the same place on August 16; at least 15 were observed in northeastern Polk County on August 23. Lesser Yellow-legs, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers, and Killdeer were noted in small numbers. One Semi-palmated Plover was collected. A single juvenal female Western Sandpiper was collected August 23. Two adult female Stilt Sandpipers were collected by Mr. D. J. Bullock, August 11, at Randallman's Lake, three miles east of Avon in southeastern Polk County. These specimens are now in the writer's collection. On August 16, four more Stilt Sandpipers were seen at the same place and two were collected by Bullock and the writer. These specimens, both males, are now in the Bullock collection in the Washington Irving Junior High School, Des Moines. An adult male Stilt Sandpiper was collected by the writer 10 miles northwest of Mitchellville on August 23. It is now in the writer's collection. DuMont recorded ("Birds of Polk County, Iowa", 1931, p. 32) two spring occurrences of this bird and one fall record, October, 1904, by Lester P. Fagen. An additional Polk County record is of one seen May 14, 1932, by Walter Rosene.

The first southward movement of the Eastern Kingbird was noted August 19, when a loose flock of 26 was seen; 28 were observed on August 23. Four Olive-sided Flycatchers were seen August 11, at Randallman's Lake, and two were collected by Bullock and the writer. These are now mounted in the former's collection. Another one was noted August 16, in the same locality. The previous earliest Polk

County record was September 4. This seemingly early migratory movement corresponds to dates of earliest southward migration in Minnesota, where it has been noted August 3 and 11 (Roberts: "Birds of Minnesota", 1932, II, p. 27).

An unusually large flight of Cliff Swallows was observed at Brenton's Slough, August 19. The huge flock, containing several thousand individuals, was watched at rest in a cornfield, milling about overhead, and dipping low over one of the ponds. Mixed with the Cliff Swallows were a few hundred Bank Swallows, estimated at approximately 25 to one.

Four Leconte's Sparrows were seen at Brenton's Slough, August 19. One was collected for identification, but was too badly shot to save. This date is over a month earlier than any previous Polk County fall date. Two immature Clay-colored Sparrows were seen August 23, near Bondurant. No fall dates were listed in "Birds of Polk County, Iowa."—PHILIP A. DU MONT, Des Moines, Iowa.

## THE NEW "BIRDS OF IOWA"

The recent publication of Philip A. DuMont's "A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa" is an achievement of which we may all feel justly proud. The author is one of our prominent members, who has for several years been making a thorough study of Iowa ornithology, past and present. Many of our members have cooperated with him in the preparation of his book, furnishing field records, data on collected specimens and other information. The result of his labor is a work on the birds of Iowa as complete and authoritative as we may expect to have for many years to come. It supplies a much needed list of the birds of our state.

Anderson's "Birds of Iowa," published in 1907, has long been out of print and was never adequate. Many regions of the state were not represented by observers at that time, and this left numerous regional gaps in his treatment. The past quarter century has brought important changes and modifications in our bird life. A new bird list was essential if we were to understand the true status and distribution of bird life of the present time. Mr. DuMont gives us this list in admirable form.

The book opens with an 11-page introduction in which the following topics are briefly discussed: Historical sketch of ornithological exploration and publication, physical features and faunal areas, the changes in breeding species, collections, field work, etc. This is followed by the Iowa list, in which 364 species are treated. An additional 18 species are treated hypothetically.

The data given for each species are very full and complete, except in the case of the common birds of which a detailed description was deemed unnecessary. The records of uncommon or rare birds are fully described and the circumstances of the record, whether made from field identification or by a collected specimen, are stated. Subspecies are taken up in considerable detail, especially where two or more are found in the same territory. Tables of measurements of subspecific differences are given. The new A. O. U. Check-list arrangement meant numerous changes in the nomenclature and additions to the subspecific forms found in Iowa. Mr. DuMont has very painstakingly worked these out, aided by experts in that field. He reliably informs us in regard to the classification our subspecies are now under.

To the reviewer the book appears to lack one substantial feature. Studies in migration are not included. For many birds there is a clearly outlined migration, both spring and fall, and a series of inclusive dates would not have added appreciable bulk to the book and would have proved a boon to field students, particularly those of the beginner type. The "selected" bibliography is very disappointing. In view of the

hundreds of articles published on Iowa birds, this list of less than 50 titles merely touches the surface.

The book contains 171 pages and is bound in heavy wrappers. It is sold for \$1 by the Dept. of Publications, University of Iowa, Iowa City. Since only 1000 copies were printed, and about 700 were distributed in the first mailing, it will no doubt be out of print in a very short time.—F. J. P.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

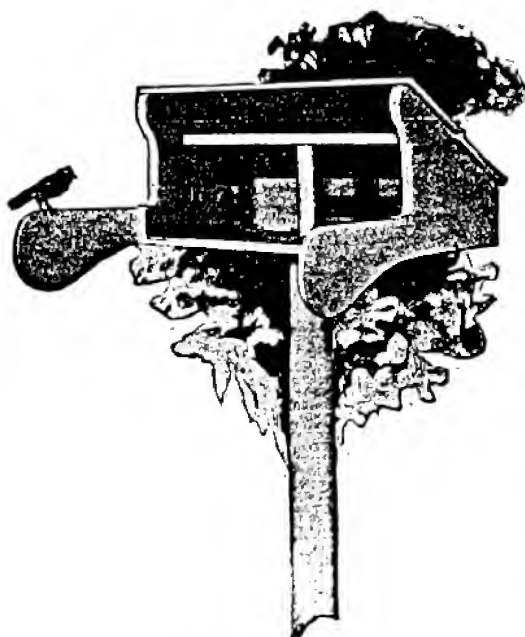
New members since our last issue are: Dubuque Bird Club, Dubuque; Mrs. Helen G. King, Grundy Center; Miss Hattie Klahn, Cedar Rapids; Mrs. Jay Woodrow, Ames.

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**Winter Care of Birds**—Mr. Schuenke, supervisor of deputy game wardens, has told me that the wardens have many requests from farmers concerning the ways to feed and further care for song birds in winter. There is at present a very great interest in birds on the part of the citizens of Iowa. I would like to suggest that each member make the acquaintance of the Farm Bureau agent of his county and proffer assistance with the problem of winter bird care. If we are to increase the tree growth of Iowa, we need more birds badly. I am certain that the county agents and wardens will appreciate your services and you will enjoy the work.—G. O. HENDRICKSON.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Winter Feeding-stations.**—Now is the time to put up the feeding-station for winter birds. The birds will come to almost any kind of feeding-shelf offered them, but the location is quite important. The station should be sheltered from wind and snow as much as possible, and should be inaccessible to cats and squirrels. If placed near the dwelling, the visitors to the station can be watched and much entertainment will be furnished. The weather-vane station shown here embodies most of the desirable features of the good feeding-station. It swings with the wind, and the interior is always dry and comfortable, while cats and squirrels cannot get into it. Birds like nut meats of all kinds, crumbs, suet, fat from cooked meat, various kinds of seeds, and many other items of food. Anyone can maintain a food-shelf. It need not be an elaborate affair, for the birds are not particular.



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Ames promises to be the scene of our 1934 convention, although arrangements are not yet completed. A fine program will be planned, and the central location assures a good attendance.

**Missouri Check-List.**—The University of Missouri (Columbia) recently issued a "Check-List of the Birds of Missouri," by Dr. Rudolf Bennitt. It is a publication of 81 pages, and in it Dr. Bennitt gives the Missouri bird list as it is known and recorded at the present time. Since Missouri's first and only other state-wide bird book was published over a quarter century ago (Widmann, 1907), the new list is a valuable asset to students working in this locality. There are 396 species and subspecies listed, and the hypothetical list contains 57. Twenty-seven birds are reported for Missouri for the first time. Complete information regarding all subspecies is included, as well as data regarding collected specimens of Missouri birds. No attempt is made to outline the migrations of birds within the state, and no doubt the field student will feel the lack of information of this sort. However, the book fulfills the offices of a check-list very well and gives our neighboring state a fully up-to-date list. It is sold for \$1.25 (wrappers).

\* \* \* \* \*

The Editor is occasionally reminded that some of the members would like to see a larger 'Iowa Bird Life.' A larger magazine means a heavier financial burden, and at the present time it is out of the question. Our income is derived almost entirely from members' dues. A larger magazine can come only from an increased membership. It is open to question whether the interests of Iowa ornithology would be better served by a larger publication, but an increase to 20 or 24 pages per issue would do no harm if we could afford it.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Publications of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union.**—During the first six years of the life of the Union, there was no regular printed publication. Mimeographed letters were issued from time to time, and the members were kept informed of the activities of the organization in this way. They were not issued at regular times and carried no serial numbers, so they could hardly be considered a serial publication. However, three or four letters were prepared each year. They were on letter-size sheets, and were signed by the President, the Secretary, or by some other officer. Most of the letters were of one-page length, although after the third year they were often two pages and contained bird notes by the members. According to the information at hand, they were issued in the following order: (1) Feb. 12, 1923 (pre-organization letter mailed to those thought to be interested in organizing a bird society); (2) Apr. 9, 1923 (an exact copy was also made under date of Apr. 26); (3) July 21, 1923; (4) Oct. 16, 1923; (5) Dec. 11, 1923; (6) Feb. 12, 1924; (7) Mar. 24, 1924; (8) July 15, 1924; (9) Nov. 1, 1924; (10) Feb. 4, 1925; (11) Mar. 12, 1925; (12) July 20, 1925; (13) Dec. 5, 1925; (14) Feb. 6, 1926; (15) Apr. 1, 1926; (16) June 15, 1926; (17) Oct., 1926; (18) Christmas, 1926; (19) Feb. 1, 1927; (20) June 14, 1927; (21) Fall, 1927; (22) Jan. 1, 1928; (23) Apr. 7, 1928; (24) Sept. 19, 1928. Only small numbers of these letters were mimeographed, and no duplicate copies were saved for the future; copies are therefore very rare at the present time.

In Feb., 1929, a printed quarterly was begun, under the title, 'The Bulletin. Iowa Ornithologists' Union.' Eight quarterly issues (size 8½ by 11½ inches) were issued during 1929-1930, with a total of 44 pages. This publication was begun as Vol. 7, which corresponded to the age of the Union, then in its seventh year. The year 1930 began as Vol. 7, No. 5, pp. 25-28. 'The Bulletin' was printed in editions of 300 copies; three issues were printed at Spirit Lake, three at Ames, and one each at Iowa City and Independence. Dr. F. L. R. Roberts was editor of the series.

'Iowa Bird Life' began as Vol. I, No. 1, in March, 1931. The first two issues were printed by a newspaper shop at Independence; all



following issues have been printed by the Mercer Printing Co., of Iowa City. The editions have been from 350 to 450 copies, usually 350.

### TO OUR MEMBERS

As we close the year 1933, we wish to thank all of you for your loyal support and hearty coöperation.

We have enjoyed a successful year. The Fairfield meeting was an important and outstanding event in our history—one that will live long in memory. We have gained 22 new members during the year, as well as a good many subscribers. Our membership roll retains a satisfactory total, and our outlook for the coming year is encouraging. We are always glad to have others join us. We suggest that you send in the names of your friends who are interested in birds. We shall be glad to send them sample copies of 'Iowa Bird Life' and invite them to join us.

Membership dues are payable January first. You will do us a great favor by paying your dues promptly, instead of waiting until we have gone to the expense and trouble of sending you one or more notices. If you remit promptly, we can plan our schedule of printing for the coming year and shall know at the outset what sizes of issues we can have. Dues are \$1 and should be sent to the Secretary, Miss Kate E. LaMar, 1231 Thirty-ninth St., Des Moines.

Ours is the only state-wide bird organization in Iowa. 'Iowa Bird Life' is the only serial publication devoted exclusively to Iowa birds. It costs money to publish our magazine. We need your support. You need our magazine, and we are counting on you for continued assistance.

With the best of wishes for the new bird year,

Very sincerely,

THE OFFICERS.

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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